

Readers' Group Questions for
How Wendy Redbird Dancing Survived the Dark Ages of Nought,
by Lyn Fairchild Hawks

These questions can guide your book group discussion. Feel free to share questions with me that you develop and that inspired good exchanges for your group.

1. What is Wendy's attitude toward life when the story begins? What accounts for her mind-set?
2. What does Wendy believe about Michael Jackson? Why?
3. Is Deanna Faire a stereotypical bully, or does she move beyond caricature? What does Wendy gain from dealing with her?
4. Why does Wendy and Tanay's friendship develop? What do they give to one another?
5. How do various characters see race—or not—and what consequences do such attitudes have?
6. Compare Wendy's family with Tanay's family. What is revealed in the comparison?
7. What does the relationship between Shaye and Wendy reveal? What are adult readers to make of this relationship? Teen readers?
8. Whose fault is it that Wendy suffers her trauma? Why does Wendy blame herself?
9. A mother like Sunny is hard to explain to a child. Explain Sunny Revere.
10. How do you characterize Wendy's relationship with her grandmother? Does it change?
11. How does Wendy's faith in Michael Jackson evolve, and why do you think it takes this particular direction?
12. By the end of the story, what has happened to that faith?
13. Does Wendy end up in the right place?
14. What do you think will happen next? If you could write a sequel, what would be the first events?
15. There are many instances of doubling. For example, Sunny and Wendy obsess over a musical artist; Deanna and Wendy love the same person. What other instances of doubling do you find, and what effect do they have on your perception of the characters and story?
16. The book is framed by car travel, and Shaye lives by his motorcycle. What do the various modes of transport indicate—for Sunny, Wendy, Grandma, and Tanay?
17. The narrative breaks from the present tense to past tense only a few times. Why might the change occur where it does?
18. Epigraphs can serve as an introduction, a summary, or even as a counter-example of a story's themes. Why does the Camus quotation preface this story?